

## System for Marketing Real Estate

### Field of Invention

The invention pertains to marketing systems. More particularly, the invention relates to automated systems for collaborative marketing of real estate properties.

5

### Background of the Invention

Various systems have been developed for the identification of real properties matching customer requirements. U.S. Patent No. 5,754,850 issued to *Janssen* is directed towards a real-estate method and apparatus for searching for homes in a search pool for exact and close  
10 matches according to primary and non-primary selection criteria. The kiosk search system has a touch monitor, a laser jet printer output portion and audio output portions. Using the system's selection screen for a home search, a user is asked what is the maximum price he or she is willing to pay for a potential home. The selection of maximum prices is displayed within rectangular borders of the screen.

15 U.S. Patent No. 5,032,989 issued to *Tornetta*, is directed towards a real estate search and location system and method. The host system maintains a database of property listings submitted by those with properties to sell, lease or rent. The host system also maintains a set of client accounts. Each remote system is capable of interrogating the database by communicating a set of specifications for a desired property to be purchased to the host  
20 system. The specifications are derived from input buyer data. The host system either processes the search data on-line and returns a summary result or batches the interrogation requests for subsequent processing off-line.

U.S. Patent No. 6,029,141, issued to *Bezos et al.* is directed towards an Internet-based customer referral system. Special hyperlinks of the associate's catalog documents are provided in association with additional information that is transmitted to the merchant web site in response to the selection of the link. In one implementation, this information includes a unique identifier of the associate and a unique identifier of the selected product. A computer program of the merchant web site uses this information to identify the associate that was the source of the referral and to credit the sale to the associate if the customer subsequently purchases the product. Commission payments can then be paid to the associates on a periodic basis. Commission payments may be made electronically, via the computer program, without the need for involvement by the merchant.

U.S. Patent No. 5,819,285 issued to *Damico* is directed towards an apparatus for capturing, storing and processing co-marketing information associated with a user of an on-line computer service using the World Wide Web. If the enrollment means determines that a user has been directed to the system from an authorized co-marketer, the enrollment means attempts to enroll the user in the system by assigning the user a unique user identification number and then asking the user to enter various personal information which is then stored in a subscriber information directory table on the enrollment database. The subscriber information directory table on the enrollment database is formed of a plurality of individual records, each of which contains several fields for storing information about a particular user.

While other variations exist, the above-described real estate marketing systems are typical of those encountered in the prior art. It is an objective of the present invention to provide a means of easily identifying qualified and motivated real estate buyers. It is a further objective to determine the purchase requirements for such buyers. It is a still further objective

of the invention to provide an incentive for an owner wishing to sell his real estate to assist the user of the system to identify qualified buyers. It is yet a further objective to provide incentive for service vendors to absorb the cost of using and maintaining the system for the user.

- 5           While some of the objectives of the present invention are disclosed in the prior art, none of the inventions found include all of the requirements identified.

### Summary of the Invention

10           The present invention addresses all of the deficiencies of prior art systems for marketing real estate and satisfies all of the objectives described above.

          A system for marketing real estate may be created from the following components. A venue containing potentially interested and qualified real estate buyers is provided. The venue is controlled by a venue operator. A data gathering means permitting the buyers to enter information into a database is provided. The data gathering means is controlled by a supplier  
15 of goods or services to the real estate industry or by a promoter.

          The information includes the buyer's contact information and real estate preference information. The contact information includes the buyer's name, address, telephone and facsimile numbers, e-mail address and times to be reached. The real estate preference information includes the buyer's desired location, building size, lot size, number of rooms of a  
20 particular specification, climate control features, other building features, lot features and location features.

          The system yields customer contacts that result from information entered into the data gathering means by the buyers. An agreement is provided between the venue operator and the

supplier of goods or services to the real estate industry or the promoter to share revenues resulting from sales, rentals or services provided based on the information gathered through the data gathering means.

In a variant of the invention, the venue containing potentially interested and qualified  
5 real estate buyers includes an open house. An open house is a real estate property held open for public viewing and offered for either of sale and lease.

In a further variant, the data gathering means further includes a computer terminal. The terminal includes a video screen, input means, non-volatile memory and a central processing unit. Data collection and organizing software running on the computer terminal is  
10 provided as is user-friendly instructions for real estate buyers to enter contact and preference information into the terminal. Means are provided for sorting and selecting potential buyers from the input information.

In still a further variant of the invention, the information collected at the computer terminal in the venue is relayed to a central location for addition to a master database. The  
15 master database provides means to track the origin of real estate contacts resulting from the collected information.

In yet another variant, the information entered into the database further includes responses to a contest displayed in connection with the data gathering means.

In a final variant of the invention, a vendor seeking to market services to the real estate  
20 agent sponsors the contest.

## Description of the Drawings

**Figure 1** is a schematic perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the invention including an enlarged illustration of an open house with prospective buyers;

**Figure 2** is an illustration of agreements between a venue operator and a supplier of  
5 goods or services to the real estate industry or a promoter used in the **Figure 1** embodiment;

**Figure 3** is an illustration of a computer input screen image for buyer contact information used in the **Figure 1** embodiment;

**Figure 4** is an illustration of a computer input screen image for real estate preference information used in the **Figure 1** embodiment;

10 **Figure 5** is an illustration of a computer input screen image for contest questions used in the **Figure 1** embodiment; and

**Figure 6** is an illustration of a computer input screen image for real estate contact analysis used in the **Figure 1** embodiment.

## 15 Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

The present invention addresses many of the deficiencies of prior art systems for marketing real estate and satisfies all of the objectives described above.

As illustrated in **Figures 1-6**, a system for marketing real estate 10 may be created from the following components. A venue 14 containing potentially interested and qualified  
20 real estate buyers 18 is provided. The venue 14 is controlled by a venue operator 22. A data gathering means 26 permitting the buyers 18 to enter information 30 into a database 34 is provided. The data gathering means 26 is controlled by a supplier of goods or services to the real estate industry 38 or by a promoter 40.

As illustrated in **Figures 3 and 4**, the information **30** includes the buyer's contact information **42** and real estate preference information **46**. As shown in **Figure 3**, the contact information **42** includes the buyer's name **50**, address **54**, telephone **58** and facsimile **62** numbers, e-mail address **66** and times to be reached **70**. As shown in **Figure 4**, the real estate preference information **46** includes the buyer's desired location **74**, building size **78**, lot size **82**, number of rooms **86** of a particular specification **90**, climate control features **94**, other building features **98**, lot features **102** and location features **106**.

As illustrated in **Figure 6**, the system **10** yields customer contacts **110** that result from information **30** entered into the data gathering means **26** by the buyers **18**. As shown in **Figure 2**, an agreement **114** is provided between the venue operator **22** and the supplier of goods or services to the real estate industry **38** or a promoter **40** to share revenues resulting from sales, rentals or services provided based on the information **30** gathered through the data gathering means **26**.

In a variant of the invention, as illustrated in **Figure 1**, the venue **14** containing potentially interested and qualified real estate buyers **18** includes an open house **130**. An open house **130** is a real estate property held open for public viewing and offered for either of sale and lease.

In a further variant, the data gathering means **26** further includes a computer terminal **134**. The terminal **134** includes a video screen **138**, input means **142**, non-volatile memory **146** and a central processing unit **150**. As illustrated in **Figures 3 and 4**, data collection and organizing software **154** running on the computer terminal **134** is provided as is user-friendly instructions **158** for real estate buyers **18** to enter contact **42** and preference information **46**

into the terminal **134**. As illustrated in **Figure 6**, means **162** are provided for sorting and selecting potential buyers **18** from the input information **30**.

In still a further variant of the invention, as illustrated in **Figure 1**, the information **30** collected at the computer terminal **134** in the venue **14** is relayed to a central location **166** for addition to a master database **170**. As shown in **Figure 6**, the master database **170** provides means to track the origin of real estate contacts **110** resulting from the collected information **30**.

In a final variant, as illustrated in **Figure 5**, the information entered into the database **34** further includes responses **174** to a contest **178** displayed in connection with the data gathering means **26**.